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XVIII.—FRENCH INFLUENCE ON THE BEGIN- NINGS OF ENGLISH CLASSICISM

It would appear, on investigation, that English classicism made itself firm roots in Elizabethan soil. Furthermore, that the plant was exotic, and came of French stock seems extremely probable. If this is our conclusion, it is necessary to premise the characteristics of an age possessing classic tendencies and show them to have appeared in sixteenth century English letters. Also we must trace interrelations of technique and theme between France and England, in order to support our latter deduction.

Controversy would hardly be aroused, surely, were an age with classic tendencies defined as an epoch when a body of critical theory grew up, concerned more especially with the technical and practical parts of literature, dealing with matters of language, vocabulary, prosody, and verb forms. As to prose, critics would concern themselves, as would authors, with style chiefly. It would naturally be an age when Greek and Latin were much studied, when they were imitated, when even the lesser breed of their imitators would stand as models to the enthusiast after form. Translations of the classics would abound, and adaptations from the remote and antique literatures rather than from the mediæval would be found in great numbers. There would be a natural struggle between rational literary instincts and the laws the classicists laid down. Discussions as to the value of the natural form and matter as contrasted with the prescribed material and technique would arouse antagonistic groups

of thinkers. Academies, or academic societies, devoted to the development of one or another theory of art might spring up. Codes of formal literary theory would be put forth; certain scholars and certain authors, as the humanists, as Horace or Aristotle, would be looked upon as general authorities, and as expressive of the ideals of the age, for individualism would be discountenanced. Definite theories as to the proprieties of the epic, the elegy, the ode, and other verse forms would be current. A definite meter would gain favor, that most regular taking prime place. Thus in England we should get the prevalence of the iamb. A set length of line, not too short for dignity, not long enough to admit of a rambling thought, would bind all artists with any claim to good form, as the decasyllabic finally did among English classic poets. A desire for regular endings to the lines, one that could be set by rule, would push forward the claims of rhyme, and a final development of these combining tendencies, in English poetry, would produce the heroic couplet. True classic tendencies would be shown also in an effort to regulate vocabulary and word combinations, in cultivating conceits, or turns, epigrammatic and antithetical bits of wit, balance of structure, and the pairing of alliterative word phrases. Periphrase, which was a Virgilian practice, and seemed less abrupt, less direct, and less crude, would be preferred to the ordinary, abbreviated, colloquial expression of an idea. Common, oral words would lose caste; a specialized diction, including a despotism in epithets, would finally grow up, containing much that was mannered and precious, and then would come disputes as to whether the same specialized diction were suitable for both prose and poetry alike. A classic age, or even an age combining elements of classicism

and of romanticism, must needs accompany a general awakening, a development of rational judgment, a popular hunger for the æsthetic, to satisfy which the ideas of the more dominant thinkers would tend to crystallize into a series of definite rules as to what was or was not truly beautiful and artistic, in form, in style, and in theme.

Even a cursory mental comparison of these qualities with the characteristics of much of the non-dramatic Elizabethan literature gives conclusive evidence of the fact that the seeker after the sources of English classicism must go back at least to sixteenth century works, if he is to make a thorough search.

Granting, however, that it is a facile task to prove the existence of classic tendencies in English literature as early as Elizabethan time, it still remains to show to what first cause the growth owes its life—a task to which the present article is devoted. The subject is one on which more and more research is being put, and about which the body of knowledge is rapidly increasing. The few scattered evidences of the strong influence of France on English tendencies in the sixteenth century which are here collated were traced as early as May, 1908. Had time allowed, many more evidences of the moving French factor in the growth of English classicism might probably have been found, but those which follow are enough to warrant, even though they be few, the putting forth of the latter half of that assertion with which this essay began.

The French mind tends to orderliness of idea and rule of procedure. It is the land of *convenance*. Hence it is not strange that the notion of developing literature on some definite and well-conceived plan appears early in France. That earliest group of her scholar-poets who

made the effort to establish a literary technique,—the Pléiade,—it is true, stole Italian thunder, for there is small doubt that Baïf took his notion of a literary academy from Tolomei's Accademia. Consequently in an ultimate analysis, any Pléiade influence on England must be traced to Italy. Yet the classic bias of non-dramatic Elizabethan literature was given directly by France.

The work of the Pléiade occurred in the third quarter of the sixteenth century (1549-1585). At the same time in England there had arisen a group of humanistic scholars of whom Ascham was one of the earliest and probably the greatest. He seems not to have owed much to France, however, probably borrowing from Castiglione's *Courtier*, but even he speaks of Italy's impulses reaching England through the medium of France, for in his *Scholemaster* (Ed. Arber, pp. 144, 145) he speaks of rhyme “. . . brought first into Italy by Gothes and Hunnes when all good verses and all good learning to, were destroyed by them and after caryed into France and Germanie, and at last receyved into England.” The next of these English humanists to show work in any way suggesting French influence was Gascoigne. He prefixed to his *Steel Glas* (1575) some *Notes and Instructions*. These form an elementary theory of poetry. The document begins with a discussion of different poetic meters and forms, defining and evolving them. This suggests the similar listing in Du Bellay's *Deffence* (1549). In the *Notes and Instructions* many French forms of verse, as the rondelet, ballade, dizaine, sizaine, etc., are intimately discussed. Many echoes of Horace's *Ars Poetica* can be noted, also, as is true of the *Deffence*. Gascoigne is quoted by Blenerhasset as one of those who set themselves to imitate Marot. Yet we have seen above that, in several instances, he was

following in the footsteps of the Pléiade. It is thus evident that he was awake to French impulses of both romantic and classic import.

One of Gascoigne's friends was Gabriel Harvey. The latter refers to Gascoigne's critical work in his letters (*Letter Book*, Camden Society Pub., p. 86, p. 100). It is from this Harvey-Spenser correspondence that we hear also of the English cognate to the Pléiade—the Areopagus—and see the evidences of a closely related band of scholars who had joint hopes, enthusiasms, efforts, and literary principles. The humanists were classicists in their attention to technique; those of their descendants who made up the Areopagus extended the classic tendencies further.

It is known that Harvey was employed in Leicester's household when he was young; and, it is thought, he was sent by Leicester to France in 1578. Now Leicester's publicly avowed admiration of Ronsard may very well have influenced young Harvey to seek some acquaintance with the French poet, an acquaintance that could not well have lacked effect upon Harvey's literary opinions.

Judging from the example of Italy, Spain, and France, it was no uncommon thing that the scholars and poets of England did—banding themselves together for the sifting out of literary problems and theories. They were hardy adventurers, too,—it was an age of exploration,—and did not fear to put their beliefs to the test. We find Harvey and Spenser exchanging examples of English verse contrived upon their Latinized prosody and offering criticism of one another's work.¹ This appears from their correspondence to which reference has already been made. In these same letters,² Spenser writes: "The twoe worthy

¹ Spenser, Ed. Grosart, Vol. ix, pp. 263, 265, 270.

² Harvey, *Letter Book*, p. 101.

gentlemen, Mr. Sidney and Mr. Dyer, have me, I thanke them, in sum use of familiaritye; of whom and to whome what speache passeth for your creddite and estimation, I leave yourself to conceyve, havinge allwayes so well conceyved of my unfained affection and good will towards you. And now they have proclaymid in there *αρειωπαγω*” A later reference by Harvey speaks of his estimation of the effort of these two in a letter written in April, 1580: “I cannot choose but thanke and honour the Good Aungell, whether it were Gabriell or some other, that put so good a notion in to the head of these two excellent Gentlemen, M. Sidney and M. Dyer, the two very diamonds of Her Majesties Courte for many speciall and rare qualities; as to helpe forward *our* new famous enterprise for the Exchanging of Barbarous and Balductum Rymes with Artificial verses.” The possessive in the last clause points to a union of Harvey and Spenser similar to that of Sidney and Dyer, and the quotation suggests the merging of the two groups on account of sympathetic purposes. The well-known friendship of Greville with Sidney has prompted many commentators to think him also a member of Sidney’s club, but although he attempts some curious tragedies modelled on the classic rules, and his efforts suggest unity of purpose with the Sidney-Dyer society, I can find no direct mention of him as an avowed literary reformer. A reference by Spenser to the “whole senate”¹ of Sidney’s society suggests other members. In the selections from the Harvey-Spenser correspondence published by Grosart,² Spenser writing to Harvey says: “Your very entire friends, Preston and Still.” These friends may have been followers of Harvey’s reforms,

¹ Spenser, Ed. cit., ix, 263.

² *Ibid.*, p. 265.

Little is known of these men from a literary point of view, except that Still is supposed to be the author of the farce called *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and Thomas Preston, to have tried his hand at tragedy. That the reformers expected to gain a following may be seen from their choice of name and the following quotation: "Your new-founded ἀρειοπαγουν," said Harvey writing to Spenser, "I honoure more, than you will or can suppose: and make greater accompte of the twoe worthy gentlemente than of the 200 Dionysii Areopagitae or the verie notablest Senatours that ever Athens dydde affourde of that number."

Of later sympathizers with the Pembroke group, Stanyhurst must evidently be counted one, since he writes:

"Good God, what a frye of wooden rythmours dooth swarme in stacioners shops, who neaver enstructed in any Grammar schoole, not atayning too thee paarings of thee Latin or Greeke tongue, yet like blind bayards rush on forward, fostring theyre vayne conceits wyth such overweening silly follyes as they reck not too bee condemned of thee learned for ignorant, so they bee commended of the ignorant for learned. Thee reddiest way, therefore, too flax theese droanes from the sweete senting hives of Poetrye, is for thee learned too applye theymselves wholye (yf they be delighted wyth that veyne) too thee true making of verses in such wise as thee Greekes and Latins, thee fathurs of knowledge, have done; and too leave too these doltish coystrets theyre rude rhythming and balductoom ballads." The curious last epithet smacks of Harvey. The quotation occurs in a preface to a translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid*, published in 1582. This translation attempts English hexameters, and it is amazing that it did not prevent all further

attempts in that line. This same Stanyhurst, it has been noted, attempted a phonetic reform of spelling in the same year that his own book was published!

Another apostle of the Areopagus was Thomas Watson, whose death Spenser laments in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*. His *Passionate Century of Sonnets* (1582), on his own confession, is a collation of imitations of other authors, and each sonnet, which is really an eighteen-line poem of three stanzas, has a prose preface announcing who is imitated, what is aimed at, and giving a glossary of words or allusions. Among other acknowledgements of indebtedness are some four or five to Ronsard:

- (a) Watson: Arber, Sonnet xxvii—like one of Ronsard's in the 2d Book of the *Bocage*:—1st 6 ll:

“Unhappy is the wight, that voide of Love,
And yet unhappie he, whom Love torments,
But greatest griefe that man is forc't to prove,
Whose haughtie Love not for his love relents,
But hoysing up her sayle of prowd disdaine,
For service done makes no returne of gaine.”

This equals:

“Celui qui n'ayme est malheureux,
Et malheureux est l'amoureux,
Mais la Misère . . . etc.”

Last 6 ll:

“She hopes (perchance) to live and flourish still
Or els, when Charons boate hath felt her peaze,
By loving lookes to conquer Plutoes will;
But all in vaine; t'is not Proserpin's ease:
She never will permit, that any one
Shall ioy his Love, but she herself alone.”

This equals:

“En vens tu baiser Pluton
La bas, apres che Caron
T'aura mise en sa nacelle . . . etc.” In *Les Melanges*.

- (b) Watson: Sonnet xxviii "doth busily imitate and augment a certaine Ode of Ronsard, which he writeth unto his Mistres" in the *Melanges*, viz.:

"Plusieurs de leurs cors denués
Se sont veuz en diverse terre
Miraculeusement mués
L'un en Serpent, et l'autre en Arbrisseau
L'un en Loup . . . etc." which Watson renders:

"Many have liv'd in countreys farre and ny,
Whose heartes by Love once quite consumed away,
Strangely their shapes were changed by and by
One to a Flow'r, an other to a Bay,
One to a Dove, another to a Stone.
But harke, my Deere; if wishing could prevaile,
I would become a Christall Mirrour I;
Wherein thou might'st behold what thing I aile:
Or els I would be chang'd to a Flie,
To tast thy cuppe, and being dayly ghest
At bord and bedde, to kiss thee mid'st thy rest;

"Or I would be Perfume for thee to burne;
That with my losse I might but please thy smell;
Or be some sacred spring, to serve thy turne,
By bathing that, wherein my heart doth dwell;
But woe is me, my wishing is but vaine,
Since fate bids Love to work my endlesse paine."

- (c) Sonnet liv. "In many choyse particulars of this Sonnet, he imitateth here and there a verse of Ronsardes in a certaine Elegie to Janet, peintre du Roy, which beginneth thus:

"Pein moi, Ianet, pein moi ie te supplie
Dans ce tableau les beautes de m'amie
De la facon . . . etc." rendered by Watson:

"What happie howre was that I lately past,
With her, in whome I sedde my senses all?
With one sure sealed kisse I pleased my tast;
Mine eares with woordes, which seemed musicall;
My smelling with her breath, like Civet sweete;
My touch in place where modestie thought meete.

But shall I say what obiectes held mine eye?
 Her curled Lockes of Golde, like Tagus sandes;
 Her Forehead smooth and white as Ivory,
 Where Glory, State and Bashfullnes held handes;
 Her Eyes, one making Pease, the other, Warres;
 By Venus one, the other rul'd by Mars;
 Her Egles nose; her Scarlate Cheekes half white;
 Her Teeth of Orient Pearle; her gracious smile;
 Her dimpled Chinne; her Breast as cleere as light;
 Her Hand like hers, who Tithon did beguile.
 For worldly ioyes who mlght compare with mee,
 While thus I sedde each sense in his degree?"

(d) Sonnet LXXXIII: ¹ "in this Sonnet the author hath imitated one of Ronsard's Odes; which beginneth thus: "

"Les muses lierent un iour
 De Chaisnes de roses Amour,
 Et pour le garder, le donnèrent
 Aus Grace et a la Beauté:
 Qui voyans sa desloyauté,
 Sur Parnase l'emprisonnèrent, etc."

Waller writes:—

"The muses not long since intrapping Love
 In chaines of roases linked all aroyl,
 Gave Beautie charge to watch in their behove
 With Graces three, lest he should wend awaye:
 Who fearing yet he would escape at last,
 On high Parnassus toope they clapt him fast.
 When Venus understood her Sonne was thrall,
 She made posthaste to have God Vulcan's ayde,
 Solde him her Gemmes, and Cestor therewithall,
 To ransom home her Sonne that was betraide;
 But all in vaine, the muses made no stoare
 Of gold, but bound him faster than before.

"Therefore, all you whom Love did ere abuse,
 Come clappe your handes with me, to see him thrall,
 Whose former deedes no reason can excuse,
 For killing those, which hurt him not at all:

¹ Vol. II, p. 285.

Myself by him was lately led awaye,
Though now at last I force my love to dye."

The prevalence of the rhymed couplet with its forecast of the more perfect heroic of later days is worthy of note here, as well as the close connection with Pléiade poetry.

But the most industrious and ambitious of the followers of the Areopagite reform movement was probably Webbe, who even went so far as to write an individual, critical document known as *A Discourse of English Poetrie*, published about 1589. His discussion of the purpose of poetry recalls Sidney. He treats of the comparative value of English and Latin as to expressiveness. This recalls Ascham, and he gives an interesting list of men whom he considers poets up to his day. The list speaks highly of the "new poet," Spenser. Founding his faith on Spenser, he expounds the proper meters for certain types of themes. Here we have an echo of Gascoigne. He comes to the same conclusion as the humanists that the iambic measure is best suited to the English genius. His attitude toward rhyme—"that it is derived from barbarism, but justified by usage," shows an advance over the humanistic cavilling, doubtless inspired by the success of Spenser's rhymed poems, which probably circulated privately for some time before their publication in 1591.

In considering the question of metre, he finds¹ that quantity is the stumbling block, and advises the remaking of classic rules to suit English words, as did Harvey. He appends a quantitative analysis. Having already discovered the iamb best suited to English, he yet advises imitation of other classic metres, especially the dactyllic hexameter—the same hopeless task proposed by Ascham,

¹ *Discourse*, Arber, p. 68.

attempted again and again by the early poets, including Blenerhasset in 1597 in his *Complaynt of Cadwalller*, where the failure is marked.¹ Webbe gives us some of Spenser's futile hexameters, mentions Harvey, and quotes two translations from Virgil's *Eclogues* by himself. These are a little worse than any of the others, with the exception of his rendering of Spenser's *Song to Eliza* in Sapphics! An appendix to his treatise gives fifty-four rules from Horace for the art of making poetry. Other members or followers of the group have been suggested by Upham.²

That the Areopagus had enemies is not to be wondered at. Many of their theories were extreme, and the pedantic Harvey often aroused antagonism even against wise suggestions, by his manner. This feeling is only just beginning to die out in the present day. How violent must it then have been, contemporaneously! Among these enemies were probably the Earl of Oxford,³ Hall,⁴ Nash,⁴ and Lodge.⁵ But the greatest enemy to the Areopagus's efforts to ingraft Latin verse, root and all, on English poetry, was the resultant poetry. The attempt died of inanition. Not so, however, the interest in literature as an art, stimulated most strongly by Sidney's *Defence* and his *Arcadia*, and by Spenser's *Poems*. The work of these two being most important of all in this investigation of Elizabethan literature, for classic practice and theory, I have left for final discussion.

¹ Spingarn, *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, New York, 1908, p. 298.

² Upham, *French Influence in English Literature*, New York, 1908, p. 26: Samuel Daniel, Abraham Fraunce, Countess of Pembroke.

³ Foxburne, *Life of Sidney*, Chapter on Areopagus.

⁴ Schelling, *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the Reign of Elizabeth*, Philadelphia, 1891, p. 33.

⁵ Bullen, *Lyrics of Elizabethan Romances*, Introduction, p. 11.

In time of writing, there seems to be little difference between the *Arcadia* and the *Apologie*, the former of which was written to please his sister, the latter probably in response to Stephen Gosson's fling at the theatre, in which he incidentally decried poetry. This appeared between 1579 and 1581. The years of Spenser's personal intercourse with Sidney were 1578-1580,¹ and as the intimacy appeared to foster Sidney's literary ambitions, it is probable that these years were the time of the writing of both Sidney's chief works, although the *Defence* was not published till 1595. In fact, so great an influence did Spenser appear to have had on Sidney that the following of Drant's rules by both Sidney and Spenser in their quantitative verse is mentioned by Church² as a sign that Sidney's rules (the *Defence*?) were founded on Drant and revised by Mr. Immerito. Now Drant was the first translator of Horace's *Ars Poetica* in England (1567). Since he influenced, then, presumably, Sidney's critical theory, as well as the practice of both Sidney and Spenser, it is a fair deduction to assume that it was through Drant that Horace became for sixteenth century England the supreme authority.

The question arises as to the impulse that led Drant to translate Horace. A similar office had been performed for Italy in 1535 by Dolce³ and in France by Pelletier, 1545. Now no connection with Dolce appears contemporaneously with Drant, but interrelations with the Pléiade have been fairly proved,—hence it is an easy assumption to judge that this choice of authority was a piece of French influence. This adoption of Horace as guide

¹ Foxburne, *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, New York, 1891.

² Church, *Life of Spenser*, Eng. Men of Letters Series, p. 24.

³ Spingarn, *op cit.*, p. 171.

would be satisfactory to both the humanistic and the poetic elements of the literary movement in England.

If not all of the impulsion was French, or Italian *via* France, it may have been that England, like France, followed Strabo, Minturno, Daniello, Scaliger and other Renaissance Italians whose doctrines, as Spingarn recounts them, bear close resemblance to Horace's rules. Though containing also some Aristotelian elements, Scaliger follows Horace in the high function he assigns to poetry, that it should write of *pleasant* and *profitable* things; Minturno, in his directions for the treatment of poetic matter, that it should have unity, proportion, and magnitude. Strabo, in the first Book of his *Geography*, defines poetry as a kind of elementary philosophy which introduces us early to life and gives us *pleasurable instruction* in reference to character, emotion, and action. Tasso makes Horace's demand for versimilitude; Palingenus's idea of the purpose of poetry repeats Horace. Direct dependence of the Pléiade on Horace, as well as indirect leaning through these media, can be displayed. Du Bellay in the *Deffence* shows his acceptance of Horace's dogma that art develops, by admitting that all literature must have beginnings,¹ that even Greek literature must once have been less than Homer (Ascham echoed this thought); by praising free translations and adaptations, or imitations of classic themes and forms." Of this last point, he says:

"Les Romains imitant les meilleurs auteurs grecs, se transformant en eux, les dévorant, et après les avoir bien digerez, les convertissant en sang et nourriture . . ." In Ronsard's ³ seventy-second sonnet in the *Cassandre*

¹ *Deffence*, ed. cit., p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³ Ed. Blanchemain, *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1857, Vol. I.

Cycle, is definitely admitted a copying of Horace; the two hundred and twenty-third shows his belief in his own worth, a Horatian doctrine. Ronsard writes in the *Préface* to the *Franciade*:¹ "J'atteste les Muses que je ne suis point ignorant, et ne crie point en langage vulgaire, comme ces nouveaux venus qui veulent corriger le magnificat." This elevation of the poet on account of knowledge is in accord with Horace's dictum that a poet should have a wide experience in many fields and should use exquisite care in his words, suiting them to the matter and cultivating a vocabulary as great as an orator's. Ronsard's distinction between a versifier and a poet² is however, an Aristotelian doctrine.

Pelletier, the French translator of the *Ars Poetica*, agrees with Horace that the Poet is fashioned by art and nature.³ Thus it has been shown that Renaissance Italy and France and England depended on a general authority—Horace chiefly; Aristotle to a degree. It is interesting to note that following the translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica* in each country there sprang up within a few years a literary society—as Baïf's in France, Tolomei's in Italy, and Sidney's in England. So close a parallel in development argues more than a mere coincidence, and the French reform, coming nearer to England by some ten years than the Italian, (Tolomei, 1539; Pléiade, 1549) may be supposed to have had the stronger influence of the two. Sidney's *Defence*, moreover, was written in answer to Gosson's treatise, as Du Bellay's was to that of Sibilet. This is another analogue.

¹ Ed. cit., Vol. III, p. 35.

² Ronsard, "Tous ceux qui escrivent en carmes, tant doctes puissent-ils estre, ne sont pas poetes. Il y a autant de différence entre un poëte et un versificateur. . ." Ed. cit., III, 19; VII, 310.

³ Spingarn, *op. cit.*, pp. 91 ff.

The *Apologie*, after a general discussion of the contempt into which poetry had fallen.¹ deals with special kinds of poetry—the pastoral, the elegy, the iambic, the satirical, the comic, the tragic, the lyric, and the heroic. These types include those recommended in the *Deffence* by Du Bellay for the poet's practice, as well as some not there mentioned. The attitude toward the divine inspiration is Horatian—platonian, and is in accord with Ronsard² and Du Bartas.³ The remarks in the *Apologie* concerning comedy, which so easily falls into license, and tragedy, which is more serious and worthy of cultivation, have the Horatian earmarks.

Although in the *Apologie* Sidney establishes what Saintsbury calls the heresy of prose poetry, and later invents a pestilent prose style in his *Arcadia*, he in the same document criticises Lyly harshly for his over-conceit in words and sound figures; saying, among prose writers as well as poets these things, with animal references, are too many. He agrees with Harvey and Ascham that literature has fallen into its low estate because good men would rather hide themselves than be numbered with such foolish writers. Lyly's *Euphues* appeared in 1598—monotonously antithesized, with endless, strained similes, founded on nature references, chiefly to animals and es-

¹ Cf. Horace again.

² *Vide* also an agreement between Sidney and Ronsard on the comparative worth of History and Poetry, showing one to present verity, the other verisimilitude. Preface to the *Franciade*, Vol. III, pp. 7 ff.

³ Du Bartas says in his *Uranie*: "The poet *sans art, sans sçavoir* creates works of divine beauty." Cf. Spenser in later discussion. Later, he says: "Usage makes art, then art perfects and regulates." Cf. Horace.

pecially to the fauna and flora of the realm of fancy.¹ This smells of the lamp and is reminiscent of those references of Ronsard's to medicinal and magical herbs, such as the bay; and to the conceited and precious language of such French writers as Chastelain, Robertet, Crétin (whose work was translated² by Lord Berner, who had been a student of French and the governor of Calais). These translations doubtless helped to induce Euphuism and must have had their effect on Sidney also. The *Arcadia* followed closely on Lyly's production. Milton once characterized Sidney's romance as a vain and amatorious poem, and it does affect a poetic transposition often. It is comparatively free from the antithesis of Lyly, but creates a new and equally intolerable prose style. Its sentences are so long, loosely put together, and transposed as to order, so lacking in syntax, that one loses the sense and falls into an *ennui* in reading it. Perhaps the following example will show both his effort and his failure to establish artificially a literary prose style:—

“But the truth is, that they both being sore hurt, the incomparable Musidorus finished the combat by the death of both the giants and the taking of Otanus prisoner, to whom he gave his life, so he got a noble friend, for so he gave his word to be, and he is well known to think himself greater in being subject to that, than in the greatness of his principality.”

Spenser's attempts were wholly confined to poetry (with the exception of some clear and natural political prose, and the last *English Poet*) and his poetical theories, aside from his enthusiasm for the introduction of classic

¹ Saintsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Lit.*, Vol. II, p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

metres into English verse, already treated in connection with the discussion of Harvey's work, are chiefly voiced through the medium of E. K., the commentator whose gloss (after the fashion of Italy and Spain) accompanies the *Shepherd's Calendar*. In the argument to the *October Eclogue*, Cuddie complaineth of the contempt of poetry (like Horace, like Sidney, like Du Bellay and Ronsard) and thinks the cause (the reason, too, is Horace's) is that poets write of the wrong things. He recalls that poetry has in all ages, even the most barbarous, been held in singular account and honour,—as does Sidney; and speaks of the divine inspiration of poetry,—as do both Sidney and Ronsard. This last theory E. K. quotes from the yet unpublished *English Poet* which the author of the calendar is soon to give out. He mentions that the general public do not value poetry—but so does Horace. He announces that Spenser has imitated Theocritus in this eclogue. This classic imitation is but putting Horace into practice. Recalling the history of the world's literature, he shows that poets were called *vates* when writing of serious things, and in their lighter verse, poets or makers. Here the close analogy to Sidney once more thrusts itself on one's notice, as it does again when he quotes historic examples of men such as Alexander who were deeply influenced by poetry. This echoes Ascham as well.

That poets used to be, and should now be, valued because they can lend immortality to a name, sounds like Ronsard's boasts to his ladies of the everlasting memory he will gain for them and his urging of this as a plea in his wooing. Here too, Spenser anticipates Sidney. Here E. K. declares in his Gloss to the *December Eclogue* that he follows the example of Horace and Ovid. In

the *Epistle to Gabriel Harvey* prefixed to the *Calendar*, E. K. speaks of Spenser's archaism indulgently and even laudatorially, as contrasted with the practice of some who have endeavored to patch holes in the English tongue "with pieces of rags of other languages, borrowing here of French, there of the Italian, everywhere of the Latin. . . ." He accompanies his support of Spenser on this point with a spirited defense of the vernacular. It is curious that Sidney in the *Defence* disapproved of these same archaisms as a whole, saying such were never used by Virgil or Sannazaro.

Spenser's interest in the vernacular may have been due to Mulcaster, who must have been a man of remarkable personality and versatile talents. He was greatly interested in French and Italian as well as in his mother tongue, and encouraged his students to translations. It was doubtless on his recommendation to Van der Noodt that Spenser obtained the opportunity to translate for the *Theatre of Worldlings* the *Visions* of Petrarch (from Marot's version), and Du Bellay's *Ruins of Rome*, afterwards included in his volume of *Complaints*. On account of this linguistic trend in his schooling, Spenser had many interests in foreign literatures. That he felt the influence of Ariosto and Tasso, he confesses in the prefatory epistle to his works addressed to Raleigh, and indeed he once told Harvey¹ that he started to imitate Ariosto as an epic model. This, as it happens, is a procedure advised by Du Bellay in his *Deffence*. Tasso was a later and probably a stronger influence,—it may be, indirectly, on account of Spenser's attention to Pléiade poetry and theories; for Ronsard's admiration for Tasso

¹ Ed. Grosart, p. 95, Vol. ix.

was frequently expressed, and the latter is said to have submitted his *Jerusalem* to Ronsard for approval.¹

Perhaps another reason for Spenser's changing from Ariosto to Tasso as a model was Harvey's intense scorn of romantic writing. Of the two, Ariosto was the less classic. That Harvey attempted to dissuade Spenser from writing the *Faerie Queene* is seen in their correspondence.² This was doubtless because of the great amount of romantic, mediæval matter it contained and the irregular Italian form (rather than the classic type) of epic which it followed. Ariosto, himself, had a Harvey-like critic on this very same point in Bembo, as did Tasso in Salviati.³ A work on the excellence of Italian as a literary instrument appeared from the hand of Salviati in 1564, and Estienne, friend of Sidney and follower of the Pléiade, wrote a similar eulogy for

¹ Phillips, *Popular Manual of Eng. Lit.*, p. 117.

² Spenser, *ed. cit.*, pp. 277 ff. Harvey writing to Spenser: "In good faith, I had once again nigh forgotten your Faerie Queene, howbeit by good chance, I have now sent hir home at the laste, neither in better or worse case than I found hir. And must you of necessity have my judgment, of hir indeede? To be plaine, I am voyde of all judgement, if your nine comoedies whereunto in imitation of Herodotus you give the names of the nine Muses (and to one man's fansie not unworthily) come not neerer Ariostoes Comoedies eyther for the finenesse of plausible Elocution, or the rarenesse of Poeticall Invention, then that Elvish Queene doth to his Orlando Furioso which notwithstanding you will needes seeme to emulate and hope to overgo, as you flatly professed yourself in one of your last Letters . . . But I will not stand greatly with you in your owne matters. If so be the Faerye and Hobgoblin runne away with the Garland from Apollo. Marke what I saye, and yet i will not say what I thought, but there an End for this once, and fare you well, till God or some good Aungell putte you in a better minde."

³ Spingarn, *op. cit.*, p. 117, and p. 305.

the French language in 1580,¹ at the time of the Harvey-Spenser correspondence. This may have been yet another influence leading Spenser to exalt his own vernacular.

This theory of the epic seems to be a composite of dogmas from Tasso, Minturno, and Du Bellay, with a dash of Ariosto in it. Tasso's definition of an epic is that it should be a story derived from some event in the history of Christian peoples, intrinsically noble and illustrious, but not of so sacred a character as to be fixed and immutable, and neither contemporary nor very remote. He believed in an allegorical twist to the narrative, as did Ariosto.² Du Bellay advised condensation of sources. Spenser obeys this dictum in respect to the material from Geoffrey of Monmouth, which he uses for one of the cantos of the *Faerie Queene*; Ronsard himself does this in his *Franciade*. Minturno, antagonistically to Aristotle's theory, sets one year as the time unity of an epic,³ as did Virgil. Ronsard adopts this in the *Franciade*, Ariosto in the *Orlando*, Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*.

Another English critical essay, the *Arte of English Poesie*, appearing about 1589, and since ascribed to George Puttenham, agrees substantially with those already quoted—speaking of a poet as a maker, an imitator, one who gets his power by divine inspiration; in pleading the excellent capacity of the vernacular; in making poetry the cause of civilization, and poets the *vates* of olden times; in raising it above other forms of writing. He differs from the others, with the exception of Webbe, in extolling rhyme, attempting to justify it as ancient and as a national substitute for quantity. In his discussion

¹ Spingarn, *op. cit.* p. 181.

² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

of the vernacular, he copies Du Bellay's statement (from the *Deffence*) that all literature must have begun small, as in Greece there was once something less than Homer.¹

It is well known indeed that Ronsard was a favorite with Elizabeth, with Mary, and with the Earl of Leicester. It is not strange, therefore, that so many parallels between the theories of Sidney's coterie and Ronsard's literary principles should become apparent, nor is it at all unlikely that such high and royal interest in the ambitious French poet made possible much sooner on English soil a real literary art. This interest, however, was not by any means the only, or even the chief interrelation between England and France at this time. Mr. Upham, in his interesting and admirable book on the *French Influence in English Literature*,—which appeared some four months after the bulk of the present investigation was made, has devoted his preliminary chapter to an exhaustive survey of all the links binding the two countries at this time. It only remains for me to point out a few minor evidences of literary borrowings, imitations, and admirations between the poets of these two nations. Aside from Ronsard, chief interest seems to have fastened on Du Bellay and Du Bartas. Howell mentions these two poets in his *Instructions for Foreign Travel*, saying: "There be some French poets who afford excellent entertainment, especially Du Bellay and Du Bartas." Spenser eulogizes them both in the Envoy to his translation of Du Bellay's *Ruins of Rome*, which he made over, from its first blank-verse form, into regular sonnet stanzas, with a final rhyming couplet. It has been claimed that this is a free and careless rendering, but a word for

¹ *Arte of English Poesie*, Arber, p. 21.

word translation of Du Bellay reveals only such freedoms in Spenser as the exigencies of the rhyme demand. Not only, however, does Spenser translate Du Bellay literally, as in this and in the *Visions*, but he imitates the type of poem in his *Ruins of Time* and the *Tears of the Muses*. He evidently accepts, also, Du Bellay's statement that Marot's pastorals are worthy of imitation, and, in the *November Eclogue* of the *Calendar*, translates Marot's Queen Mother sonnets, though E. K. takes pains in the Gloss to say it far surpasses the reach of Marot. This is doubtless because an admiration for so romantic a poet was countenanced neither by the French nor the English literary society. The Pléiade writers, though mostly Catholic, mix their religion curiously with paganism, and this same mixture of Christianity and Paganism is visible in Spenser's *Four Hymns*. The later following of Du Bartas, the religious trend of their literature to of Pléiade theories in France deflected, by the influence Protestantism, which England paralleled,—as in Milton, for example.

Sidney's visit to France in 1572 made him friends with a follower of Pléiade theories, Henri Estienne, whose critical work has already been referred to, and with Languet, the humanist. He also corresponded with Pibrac, who revived Baïf's academy in 1576. Spenser, too, may have made a visit to France, as he notes such an intention in the *December Eclogue* of the *Calendar* (1579). It is probable that if he went, he too made friends among the Pléiade group. But literary men of England, during the whole of Elizabeth's reign, had been traveling, studying or soldiering in France: Skelton at Louvaine; Gascoigne as a soldier; Raleigh, spending six years in France; and More, two.

Besides this very probable personal acquaintance of the great literary lights of both countries, there was the study at the English Universities of French literature. Skelton ranks the influences upon himself from his studies in this order: Pagius, Petrarch, the French humanists, and the classics. Harvey in his correspondence with Spenser speaks of the reading pursued at Cambridge, in which French literature figures very prominently. Harvey's *Musarum Lachrymae*,¹ Spenser's *Tears of the Muses*, and Ronsard's *Dialogue entre les Muses Deslogées et Ronsard* are all on the same theme.²

Sidney notes in his *Defence* that France and England, as distinct from Italy and Spain, employ the cæsura. He practised the Virgilian circumlocution admired and advised by Ronsard,³ but this is a common Renaissance habit, and would be a meaningless parallel unaccompanied by other agreements.

Similarity of themes, also, may be traced in Spenser to Marot, Ronsard, and Du Bellay. One theme, evidently a Renaissance convention, occurs in Marot, Ronsard and Spenser, all three, in varying degrees of elaboration: this is, the Temple of Cupid idea. Marot's *Temple de Cupidon* is doubtless founded on the chivalric side of the *Roman de la Rose*.⁴ Spenser treats of this theme in the *Faerie Queene*, Bk. III, 12; 5, 6 ff., Ronsard mentions such a temple-to-Cupid idea twice, once in the Cassandra cycle, once in the Marie cycle.⁵ In the translation of

¹ *Vide* also Fletcher, J. B., Article on Spenser in *American Encyclopædia*.

² Nash and Lodge show interest, if mocking interest, in this Gallic theme by their *Muse out of Purgatory*.

³ *Ed. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 17.

⁴ Courthope, *Hist. of English Lit.*, Vol. II, p. 40.

⁵ *Ed. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 137, p. 229.

Du Bellay's *Ruins of Rome*, is brought out noticeably in stanza 3 the inconstancy of the world; in stanza 9, the passing of everything; in stanza 20, that all shall fade. In Spenser's *Ruins of Time*, in the introductory stanza before the last part, occurs: "All is vanity"; an earlier passage in the same poem suggests not only Du Bellay's inconstancy of the world, but Milton's passage on fame in *Lycidas*. It goes:

"What booteth it to have been rich alive?
What to be great? What to be gracious
When after death no token doth survive
Of former being in this mortal house,
But sleeps in dust, dead and inglorious,
Like beast, whose breath but in his nostrils is,
And hath no hope of happiness or bliss?"

The series of pageants concluding this poem are in clear imitation of a series in Du Bellay's *Visions*. In the *Tears of the Muses*, still another imitation of the melancholy theme from Du Bellay appears:

"For all man's life me seems a tragedy,
Full of sad sights and sore catastrophes;
First coming to the world with weeping eye,
Where all his days, like dolorous, sad trophies,
Are heap with spoils of Fortune and of fear
And he at last laid forth on baleful bier."

Ronsard echoes this theme also in the Madrigal of the Cassandre Cycle (Vol. 1, p. 90), "Time that passes never comes again," and the *Epitaphe de Marie* (Vol. 1, p. 248),

"Unhappy he who trusts in this mortal world."

An effort to establish a connection between Du Bellay's *Sonnets de l'Honnête Amour* and Spenser's *Hymns to*

Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty resulted in nothing. They are apparently quite independent efforts. More success is, however, obtained by comparing the *motifs* of Spenser's *Amoretti* with those of Ronsard's *Amours*. A few references to the *Faerie Queene* will be included. References throughout to Ronsard will be to the Blanche-main Edition, Vol. I.

The 148th Sonnet to Cassandre wishes away night for the day that will bring her. A parallelism will be found in the *Faerie Queene*, Bk. III, 4, 55. On the immortality of poetry, Spenser talks in the 27th, 48th, 69th and 75th sonnets, and in the *Ruins of Time* writes:

"Because they living cared not to cherish
No gentle wits, through pride or covetise,
Which might their names forever memorise,"

which seems an indirect repetition of this theme. Ronsard expects his praise of Cassandre to live on to posterity and be engraved in Memory's most sacred temple (Cassandre Cycle, 193, and *Elégie*, p. 124). The Marie Cycle, *Elégie*, p. 228, and *Stances*, p. 233, show this even more plainly.

The comparisons, in both poets, of love to war are frequent: Spenser, *F. Q.*, Bk. II, 2, 26; Bk. II, 4, 35; *Sonnets* 10, 11, 12, 14, 52, 57, 67. In Ronsard, there are two references to the wounding power of love in the Cassandre Cycle (59, 210) and two in the Marie Cycle (p. 175, and *Chanson* on p. 225). Sonnets bearing on personal appearance of the fair agree as to golden hair and powerful eyes. On the former detail, see Spenser, *Sonnets* 37 and 81; and Ronsard, *Cassandre*, 41. On the beautiful and powerful eyes, see Spenser, 9; Ronsard, *Cassandre*, 41, 59, 210, *Marie*, p. 175. Spenser deals more

largely in classic reference (*vide Sonnets* 1, 4, 23, 24, 28, 35, 38, 39); though, as in *Astrée*, p. 268, Ronsard does resort to this device.

Spenser finds his lady more cruel, as he notes in *Sonnets* 18, 25, 31, 32, 41, 49, 27, 51, 54, 36. Ronsard complains a little of Cassandre on p. 90, where he curses the mirror that renders her so haughty proud. Spenser's almost endless series of comparisons of lovers to all things else in the universe is hardly equalled by Ronsard, though some of his comparisons, as in *Cassandre*, 61, 216, and *Marie*, p. 233, are quaint and conceited.

Though this investigation is only partial, certainly enough has been evidenced to show intimate relations between early Elizabethan writers and that school of French poets who made classicism possible in their own land and in England, too, through their influence on the Areopagus.

It must not be supposed, however, that the present writer is attempting to rob Italy of all claim to influence—only to show how large a share France played, despite the big debt England owes to the Italian Renaissance. Nor does the establishment of Horace as chief influence and authority for sixteenth century writers preclude Aristotelian guidance, which was perhaps most evident in England on Sidney.

Spingarn's remark ¹ that the humanistic effect in England was distinctly classic, states a truth that challenges no controversy, but it was not only the early humanists who put this stamp on English Literature, it was the later school of the Elizabethan age, of which the Areopagus seems nearly, if not absolutely, the greatest nucleus.

¹ Spingarn, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

The Areopagites and their following, both in practice and in theory, compare well with the efforts of the Pléiade, the distinctly classic nature of which has recently come to be regarded by French critics.¹ The English writers, urged on doubtless by the popularity of the *Courtier*, which was translated by Hoby, 1561, betook themselves to the writing of conduct books, a mark of classic artificiality in life—such is Spenser's *Faerie Queene* on his own statement in the introductory epistle to Raleigh; such was Sidney's *Arcadia*, indirectly.

This enthusiasm for rule and authority extended to their notions of tragedy also, except among the actor-playwrights, probably helped on by Horace's dispraise of comedy on account of its tendency to drop into licentious writing, and his elevation of tragedy on Greek models in which the Choruses were to be preserved and to take a moral tone. In his *Defence*, Sidney, praising whatsoever was of good repute in the literature of his day, puts in the forefront Sackville's *Gorboduc*, though he criticises it for not strictly observing the unity of time, and being faulty in circumstance—whereupon he takes the opportunity to give some rules for the preservation of the unities, and to inveigh against tragi-comedy or the romantic drama. He also puts in his word against farce. Now *Gorboduc* follows the Senecan model of play which was becoming so popular in France. A volume of translations from Seneca had been published in England by Heywood between 1560 and 1580, and aside from Sackville's attempts, there were the classic tragedies of Sidney's great companion, Fulke Greville (*Alaham, Mustapha*), and

¹ *Vide* previous note from Pellissier; and preliminary notices in Crepet's *Recueil des Poetes Français* to Ronsard and Du Bellay, Vol. II, pp. 55 ff., and pp. 9 ff.

the translation by the Countess of Pembroke of Garnier's *Marc-Antoine*. Daniel, also, a follower of the Areopagus, wrote two plays of this sort, *Cleopatra* and *Philotas*. He also wrote an enthusiastic *Defence of Rhyme*, showing the increase of favor for that element of classicism.

While decrying farce, Horace had suggested as a substitute, satire, which, on his decree, was a type of wit that should be kept within the bounds of decency. It is not strange, therefore, that some satire should have been attempted by the Areopagite following. Perhaps the best example is Spenser's *Mother Hubberd's Tale*. Oddly enough, this is written in heroic couplets, of which the following may be taken as typical examples:

I. "But if perhaps into their noble sprights
Desire of honour or brave thoughts of arms
Did ever creep, then with his wicked charms
And strong conceits he would it drive away,
Ne suffer it to house there half a day."

II. "One joyous hour in blissful happiness,
I choose before a life of wretchedness."

III. "To every sound that under heaven blew,
Now went, now slept, now crept, now backward drew."

"So did he good to none, to many ill,
So did he all the Kingdom rob and pill."

V. "That on his head he wore, and in his hand
He took Caduceus his snaky wand."

VI. "And bade him fly with never resting speed
Unto the forest, where wild beasts do breed."

VII. "Through due deserts and comely carriage
In whatso please employ his personage."

The first example was chosen simply to show the decasyllabic rhyming couplet, though it also predicts by its peppering of adjectives the later epithet craze, as do II and VII. The couplet numbered seven also illustrates the paired alliterative groups which the school of Pope was later to pursue to the point of monotony. All of the lines show central cæsura; and some few, subsidiary pauses. Balanced structure with repetition can be seen by reference to III. Antithesis, though faint, and the classic references soon to be ridden to death by Milton and Dryden, such as the one which appears in V, could be multiplied many times from this one poem. The diction is not so strained as in later classicists, but it is precise and cold. Satiric elements appear also in Virgil's *Gnat*. Spenser chose the couplet ending even to his sonnets also.

Among the lyrics scattered through the *Arcadia*, the eclogue in the second book contains some stiff and jerky couplets.

R "We are too strong; but Reason seeks no blood,
P Who to be weak do feign they be too good.
R Though we cannot o'ercome, our cause is just.
P Let us o'ercome and let us be unjust.
R Yet Passions yield at length to Reason's stroke.
P What shall we win by taking Reason's Yoke?"

Here we have antithesis, and an evidence of central cæsura, though weak. And others of these lyrics are evidently attempts at classical metres, doubtless written under Harvey's influence.

Constable's sonnets appearing in 1592 also end with the rhyming couplet, as:—

"The rain wherewith she watereth the flowers,
Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers."

And so do those of Daniell:

"Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain."

In the last quotation, appear the strain of the world's vanity, so prevalent in Spenser and Du Bellay, and a forecast of antithetical arrangement of idea in the elaborate couplet of later years. This same poetic device, according to Saintsbury,¹ was made evident as early as the miscellany known as Tottel's, where the authors showed "a desire to use a rejuvenated heroic, either in couplets or in various combinations such as the elegy or the sonnet."

Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem*, in the edition of 1600, bears on the title page the inscription: "Done into English heroicall verse." The stanzas are eight-lined, the last two lines, the rhyming couplet, with central cæsura showing. Epithet, antithesis, and balanced structure, less developed and less well managed than in later work, but still evidencing a feeling for a definite artificial form, may be traced. The Renaissance belief that every epic should be allegorical, shows in the appended "Account of the Allegory of the Poem." A few citations may not be amiss:—

I. "Both fair, both rich, both won, both conquered stand."

II. "Some praised, some paid, some counselled, all pleased."

III. "And Star fit time which will betide ere long
To increase thy glory and revenge our wrong."

IV. "I will, I will, if your courageous force
Dareth so much as it can well perform,

¹ Saintsbury, *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, Vol. II, p. 9.

Tear out his cursed heart without remorse,
The nest of treason false and guile enorm;
Thus spake the angry knight; with headlong course
The rest him followed with a furious storm;
We reaped naught but travel for our toil;
Theirs was the praise, the realms, the gold, the spoil."

V. "And therefore, loud their jarring trumpets sound,
Their yelling cries to heaven upheaved been
The horses thundered on the solid ground,
The mountains roared and the valley green. . . ."

The heroic couplet, or the alternating rhymed decasyllables were a minor detail as compared with the fondness for classic forms,—as the epic, the pastoral,—and the use of conceits, such as the naming of the lady praised in their verse as Diana, Phillis, Licia, Delia, Idea. It seems fairly evidenced even by these disjointed proofs that England had in her sixteenth century literature a distinctively classic strain struggling with the more prominent and popularly recognized romanticism, and also that this tendency owed itself in great measure to that early school of French critics, the Pléiade, working upon the closely following writings of the English humanists and the Areopagites. How much stronger than they knew did these early French critics build, when thinking but to defend poetry they made for her an æsthetic code! And to what a vast literature these may be accounted as first parents when we reckon among their descendants that great and honorable assembly, the classic writers of France and England!

ELIZABETH JELLIFFE MACINTIRE.